

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0742

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OCON ELAB
SUBJECT: LABOR ATTACHE CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR MAR. 13-19

1. THE UNEXPECTED SCHEDULING OF GENERAL ELECTIONS IN INDIA IN MID-MARCH HAS CAUSED THE EMBASSY TO MAKE A CAREFUL REVIEW OF ITS ACTIVITIES AND OTHER USG EVENTS SCHEDULED DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. WE ARE ADJUSTING OUR PROGRAMS SO AS TO AVOID ANYTHING WHICH MIGHT SUGGEST EXCESSIVE US INTEREST (OR INTERFERENCE) IN THE ELECTIONS OR OTHERWISE APPEAR INAPPROPRIATE. WE HAVE COMMUNICATED SEPARATELY WITH THE DEPARTMENT REGARDING THE PRECAUTIONS WHICH WE INTEND TO OBSERVE CONCERNING ELECTION REPORTING.

2. WE NOTE THAT THE LABOR ATTACHE CONFERENCE IS SCHEDULED IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE POLLING WHICH WE UNDERSTAND WILL TAKE PLACE FROM MARCH 16 THROUGH 19. ALTHOUGH THE EMBASSY WILL BE PREOCCUPIED WITH THE ELECTION PROCESS, WE BELIEVE THIS IN ITSELF WOULD NOT PREVENT THE CONFERENCE FROM TAKING PLACE. WE ARE CONCERNED, HOWEVER, THAT THE SUDDEN INFLUX OF SOME 50 US OFFICIALS COULD AROUSE INDIAN SUSPICIONS OR BECOME AN ELECTION ISSUE IN VIEW OF THE TIMING OF THE CONFERENCE. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, THERE IS A LONG HISTORY OF DEEP SUSPICION ON THE PART OF SOME INDIAN OFFICIALS OF US INTERFERENCE IN THE INDIAN

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POLITICAL PROCESS WITH RELAXED CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS THERE IS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE INFLUX OF AMERICANS COULD BE MADE A LAST MINUTE ELECTION ISSUE BY LEFTIST OPPOSITION CANDIDATES.

3. WE HAVE HOSTED A NUMBER OF LABOR ATTACHE CONFERENCES AND HAVE COME TO LOOK FORWARD TO THE OPPORTUNITY THEY

HAVE GIVEN ALL OF US TO BENEFIT FROM THE PRESENCE AND KNOWLEDGE OF LABOR SPECIALISTS FROM WASHINGTON AND IN THE FIELD. AS RELUCTANT AS WE ARE TO INTERFERE WITH PLANS FOR THIS YEAR, WE HAVE REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT THE CONFERENCE SHOULD NOT TAKE PLACE IN DELHI UNTIL THE ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED. THERE IS ANOTHER PROBLEM REGARDING POSTPONING THE CONFERENCE UNTIL THE LATTER PART OF MARCH SINCE THE NONALIGNED COORDINATING COMMITTEE WILL BE MEETING HERE FROM MARCH 23 THROUGH 28. AT THAT TIME EMBASSY FACILITIES WILL BE FULLY UTILIZED COVERING THE CONFERENCE AND SINCE OVER FIFTY DELEGATIONS WILL ATTEND, THE CITY WILL BE CLOGGED WITH VISITORS. WE REGRET, THEREFORE, THAT FROM OUR STANDPOINT THE CONFERENCE COULD NOT BE RESCHEDULED UNTIL EARLY APRIL.

4. WE DO WISH, HOWEVER, TO EXTEND A FIRM INVITATION TO HOLD THE CONFERENCE IN DELHI IN APRIL. THE WEATHER SHOULD NOT BE TOO BAD EARLY IN THE MONTH AND ALL OF OUR FACILITIES WILL BE AVAILABLE. WE HOPE THE CONFERENCE MIGHT BE HELD THEN AND DEEPLY REGRET THE INCONVENIENCE WHICH ANY RESCHEDULING MAY CAUSE.

5. IF THE CONFERENCE IS RESCHEDULED FOR APRIL, THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CHECK OUT THE PLAN WITH THE NEW AMBASSADOR WHEN HE IS APPOINTED IF HE EXPECTS TO BE IN DELHI BY THAT TIME.
SCHNEIDER

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